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Zimmerman Pine Moth

By Robert B. Carlson¹ and Louis F. Wilson²

The Zimmerman pine moth, *Dio-ryctria zimmermani* (Grote), is native to North America. It has been reported from the Mexican border to Canada but appears to be more common and more destructive in the northern half of the United States and the adjacent southern areas of the Canadian Provinces.

This insect infests the tips of pine branches and the main stem. The injury not only retards growth but deforms the tree.

Hosts

A list of native and exotic pines susceptible to attack by the Zimmerman pine moth includes:

Pine:

Scotch

Pinus sylvestris L.

Japanese red

P. densiflora Sieb. & Zucc.

Red

P. resinosa Ait.

Ponderosa

P. ponderosa Laws.

Eastern white

P. strobus L.

Jack

P. banksiana Lamb.

¹ Associate Insect Ecologist, North Central Forest Experiment Station maintained at St. Paul, Minn., by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota; now Associate Professor, Department of Entomology, North Dakota State University, Fargo, N. Dak.

² Insect Ecologist and project leader at the North Central Station's field office in East Lansing, maintained in cooperation with Michigan State University.

Mugo

P. mugo var. *mughus* (Scop.)
Zenari.

Austrian

P. nigra var. *austriaca* (Hoess)
Aschers. & Graebn.

Attacks have been reported on a few other host species, but these species are either rare or of doubtful parentage.

Scotch and Japanese red pine are particularly susceptible to attack. All sized trees are attacked, but young trees in plantations are most vulnerable. Poorly stocked stands receive heavier attacks than do well-stocked stands.

Damage

Zimmerman pine moth larvae feed inside the terminal shoots and mine the inner bark anywhere on the main stem. Discernible signs of attack on terminals are accumulations of coarse "sawdust" in loose webbing at the bases of branches in the top whorl. Terminal shoots later turn brown and may break off (fig. 1). Extensive terminal feeding results in a dead top.

Attacks on the main stem are indicated by pitch masses at points where the larvae mine through the outer bark (fig. 2). Fresh pitch masses are shiny and sticky. Stem mining may kill a few adjacent branches or part or all of a tree depending upon the degree, location, and duration of attack. A partially girdled whorl may be so weakened



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Figure 1.—Zimmerman pine moth damage on the upper whorl.

that the tree breaks off at the point of injury. The stem may be constricted, crooked, or forked at the injured points on surviving trees. Heavily injured trees may have a burllike growth on the trunk above the girdled area (fig. 3). The wood of injured trees becomes densely impregnated with resin.

Description

The egg of the Zimmerman pine moth is ovoid, slightly flattened beneath, and lightly patterned above. It is about one thirty-second of an inch long. A freshly laid egg is creamy white. As the embryo develops, the egg turns pink and gradually becomes reddish brown before hatching.

At first, the young larva is light reddish brown but turns darker with age. The full-grown larva (fig. 4) is three-fourths to 1 inch



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Figure 2.—Pitch mass on main stem of pine at the point where larvae bore into the bark.

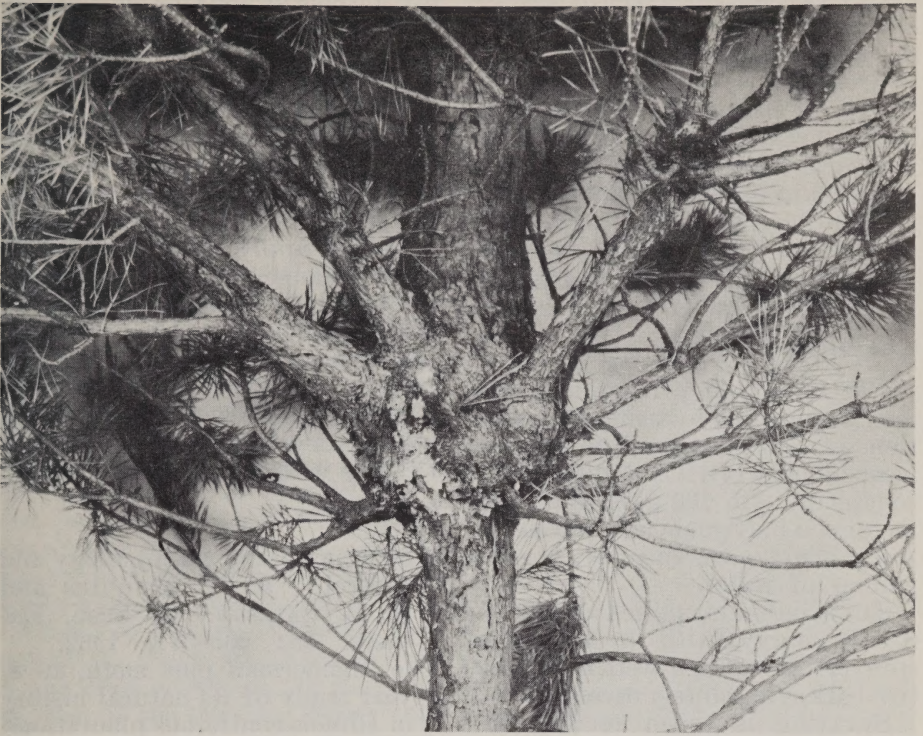


Figure 3.—A burllike growth on the trunk of a Scotch pine caused by extensive girdling of Zimmerman pine moth larvae. (Photo 26960-1, courtesy of Michigan State University.)

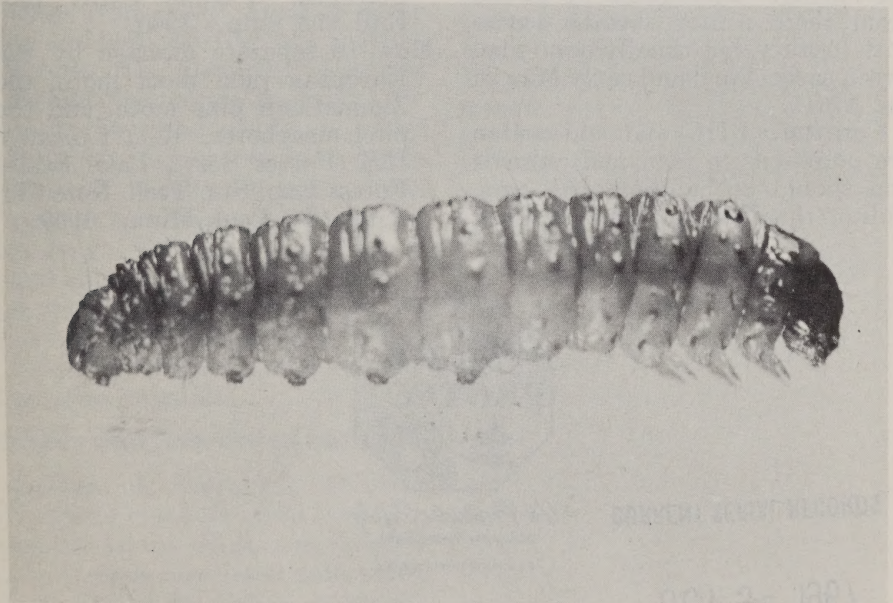


Figure 4.—Full-grown larva of the Zimmerman pine moth.

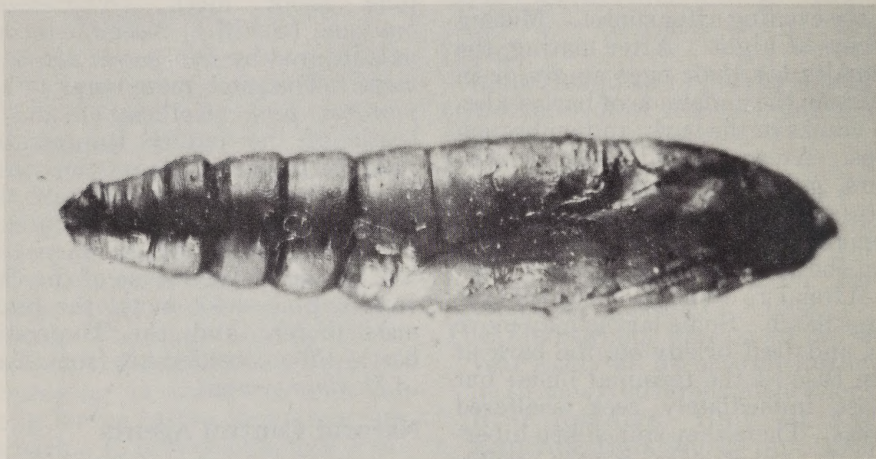
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long and has a brown head. Body color, which varies among individuals, ranges from light gray to pink to greenish yellow. The color is related to the host species and food supply. Rows of dark spots, each with a single bristle, adorn the sides and top of the body.

The newly formed pupa is light brown but darkens to deep brown or

black at maturity (fig. 5). Its length varies from one-half to three-fourths of an inch.

The adult moth has a wing expanse of 1 to 1½ inches (fig. 6). The forewings vary from gray to black with red markings and light and dark gray zigzag lines. The hindwings are tan or pale yellow, the color intensifying at the margins.



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Figure 5.—Pupa of the Zimmerman pine moth.



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Figure 6.—Adult of the Zimmerman pine moth.

Life History and Habits

Most information on the Zimmerman pine moth has been collected in the Northern United States. In this area there is only one generation per year.

Adults emerge from the tree between the end of June and mid-September. They are not often seen because they remain concealed in the foliage or vegetation near the tree during the day, becoming active in the evening after sunset. Mating occurs at night. After mating, the females lay their eggs singly or in pairs on the underside of bark scales, in cracks in the bark, and on branch tips. Areas around wounds, cankers, galls, and sapsucker feeding sites appear to be preferred. Some females may lay as many as 80 eggs, but the average is around 20.

After 7 to 10 days on the tree the eggs hatch. Some larvae may move to, and feed briefly on, the bark at the base of the terminal buds; but most immediately seek sheltered areas. There they spin silken hibernacula (protective winter coverings) and remain in them until the following spring. The larvae emerge from early April to early May and bore into the bark of stems and terminals, where they feed and mine until sometime in July. Although they feed singly, as many as 20 larvae may be found in a single whorl of heavily infested trees. Pupation occurs between early and late July. The larva constructs a pupal chamber just under the bark and prepares an escape hole by chewing the bark to a very thin cap.

The adults appear about 15 to 23 days after pupation.

Similar and Associated Insects

Larvae of *Dioryctria abietella* (D. & S.) (= *abietivorella* (Grote)) resemble larvae of *D. zimmermani* and are often associated with them. Their life cycles differ, however; more fully developed larvae of *D.*

abietella are found in the fall and winter. Another insect, *D. cambicola* Dyar, is almost identical to *D. zimmermani* in most stages but has a slightly different hindwing coloration in the adult stage. Some entomologists consider *D. cambicola* a race of *D. zimmermani*.

Damage caused by several other insects may be confused with Zimmerman pine moth damage. Terminals injured by the European pine shoot moth (*Rhyacionia buoliana* (Schiff.)) resemble terminals injured by *Dioryctria zimmermani*. The pitch mass borer (*Vespa pini* (Kellcott)) and a beetle of the family Buprestidae produce pitch masses on the stems of pines. The pitch mass of the beetle is pink or reddish in contrast to the white mass of *D. zimmermani* and *V. pini*. The larvae of the European pine shoot moth, the pitch mass borer, and the Buprestid beetle differ considerably from those of *D. zimmermani*.

Natural Control Agents

Several species of hymenopterous parasites and a single dipterous parasite have been reported attacking the egg, larval, and pupal stages of the Zimmerman pine moth. Up to 45-percent parasitization by *Trichogramma minutum* Riley has been reported in the egg stage. The early larval stages, when the insects are protected inside the tree, are rarely parasitized. However, parasitization of full-grown larvae is comparatively high. One reason may be that, while preparing the pupal chamber and the adult escape hole, many larvae remove too much bark; thereby leaving a small hole that permits easy access by the parasites.

The two most prevalent parasites of the immature stages are *Exeristes comstockii* (Cress.) and *Hyssopus rhyacioniae* (Gah.). Parasitization of larvae or pupae has exceeded 40 percent in some localities, but generally it is much lower. At pres-

ent, parasitization alone in any of the insect's stages has not been sufficient to control this pest.

Predators have rarely been observed attacking the Zimmerman pine moth. Spiders kill some adults, and woodpeckers have been reported to be efficient predators.

Some mortality of larvae from disease has been observed, but not enough to alter the general population level noticeably.

Chemical Control

Control of 95 percent or more may be obtained by using formulations of either 1 pound of benzene hexachloride (BHC) (emulsifiable concentrate) in 100 gallons of water, or one-half pound of endosulfan (emulsifiable concentrate) in 100 gallons of water.

The solution is applied as a stem-drench spray with a hydraulic sprayer. Thorough wetting of the tree bark is absolutely necessary.

Spraying is timed to kill the young larvae before they penetrate the bark. It is most effective if solutions are applied just before the larvae emerge from hibernation in the spring. Emergence of larvae from their winter sheaths varies with locality, but usually occurs between early April and early May in the North.

Caution: BHC and endosulfan are poisonous to man and animals and should be handled with care. Follow the directions and heed all

precautions on the container labels. Special caution is required when using emulsifiable concentrates: wear rubber gloves and avoid contact with eyes, nose, and mouth. After mixing chemicals or spraying, wash exposed body surfaces with soap and water. Change clothing if spray has been spilled on it.

Do not apply insecticides where there is danger of deposit on fruits or vegetables or on plants grazed by cattle. Avoid overdosing. Don't apply near streams, ponds, and lakes.

Store chemicals in plainly labeled containers out of reach of children. Destroy used containers.

References

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